

For a Bride

AN IMMERSION CEREMONY

Intention

כוונה KAVANAH

To be read before preparing for immersion:

Immersion in water softens our form, making us malleable, dissolving some of the rigidity of who we are. This allows us to decide who we wish to be when we come out of the water. The water changes us neither by washing away something nor by letting something soak in to us, but simply by softening us so that we can choose to remold ourselves into a different image.¹

Immersion

טבילה T'VILAH

To be read at the mikveh's edge before you enter the water:

Our mothers Rebecca and Rachel were betrothed and began new lives at the gently flowing water of the well. Our mother Yocheved gave renewed life to her child Moses in the ever-flowing waters of the Nile. Our sister Miriam danced for the saving of lives beside the overflowing water of the Sea of Reeds.

Water is God's gift to living souls, to cleanse us, to purify us, to sustain and to renew us.

I am now prepared to leave behind that which I no longer choose, to become one with another life, to become a creator of new possibilities, to become a partner in sharing the joys of life, to teach and to learn the lessons of married life.²

FIRST IMMERSION

Slowly descend the steps into the mikveh waters and immerse completely so that every part of your body is covered by the water. When you emerge, recite the following blessing:

Following the first immersion, recite:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי | Baruch atah, Adonai |
| אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, | Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam, |
| אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, | asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, |
| וְצִוָּנוּ עַל הַטְּבִילָה. | v'tzivanu al hat'vilah. |

Praised are You, Adonai, God of all creation, who sanctifies us with Your commandments and commands us concerning immersion.

SECOND IMMERSION

Take a deep breath and exhale completely, while gently and completely immersing for the second time.

When you emerge, recite the following:

וְאַרְשֵׁתִּיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם; וְאַרְשֵׁתִּיךָ לִי בְצֶדֶק
וּבְמִשְׁפָּט, וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים.
וְאַרְשֵׁתִּיךָ לִי, בְּאֱמוּנָה; וְיָדַעְתָּ, אֶת־יְהוָה.
V'ayras'tich li l'olam; v'ayras'tich li b'tzedek
uv'mishpat, uv'chesed, uv'rachamim.
V'ayras'tich li b'emunah v'yadaat et Adonai.

I will betroth you to me forever.

I will betroth you to me with righteousness and with justice,
with lovingkindness and with compassion.

I will betroth you to me in truth; and we will come to know God.³

THIRD IMMERSION

To be read before you immerse:

My God, Creator and Sustainer of all life,
may I step forth into a life filled with continued wisdom and deeds of kindness.

May I step forward into a life filled with the blessings of new beginnings.

May I be a loving mate, partner, and friend to my beloved.

Be with me as I enter this new time in my life.

May You, God, who has blessed my coming forth into this day,
bless my going out into life, fulfillment, and peace.⁴

Relax, and let your body soften, as you slowly and completely immerse for the third time.

When you emerge, recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהֵחַיְנוּ, וְקִיַּמְנוּ, וְהִגִּיעַנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה.
Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam
shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu la'zman hazeh.

Blessed are You, Majestic Spirit of the Universe, who gives me life,
sustains the rhythms of my body and brings me to this moment of renewal.⁵

ATTRIBUTIONS

This ceremony was created by Matia Rania Angelou, Deborah Issokson and Judith D. Kummer for Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters.

1 The National Center for Learning and Leadership, CLAL
2 Penzner, Barbara and Zwiback-Levenson, Amy. *The New Jewish Wedding*, Anita Diamant. New York: Summit, 1985, p. 156.
3 Hosea 2:21–22

4 Charlotte Goldberg Mikveh. Park Synagogue, Cleveland, OH.
5 Interpretive English translation by Matia Rania Angelou, Deborah Issokson and Judith D. Kummer



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